

# DCJS

DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center  
Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety  
State of West Virginia

## CORRECTIONAL POPULATION FORECAST - 2003 UPDATE

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West Virginia's state prison population is one of the fastest growing prison populations in the country. Therefore, forecasting trends and changes in the correctional population have become an important tool to assist policy makers in the state. The purpose of this report is to provide an update as to the performance of the current correctional population forecast.

West Virginia's Correctional Population Forecast has been remarkably accurate in the past, with a small rate of difference between the forecast and the actual population. A new forecast began in July 2002. Toward the end of 2002 and in 2003 the forecast has projected higher prison population numbers than actual exist.

### Correctional Population Growing

Since January 2002, the state correctional population, has grown steadily from 4,234 to 4,758, increasing by an average of 22 inmates per month.

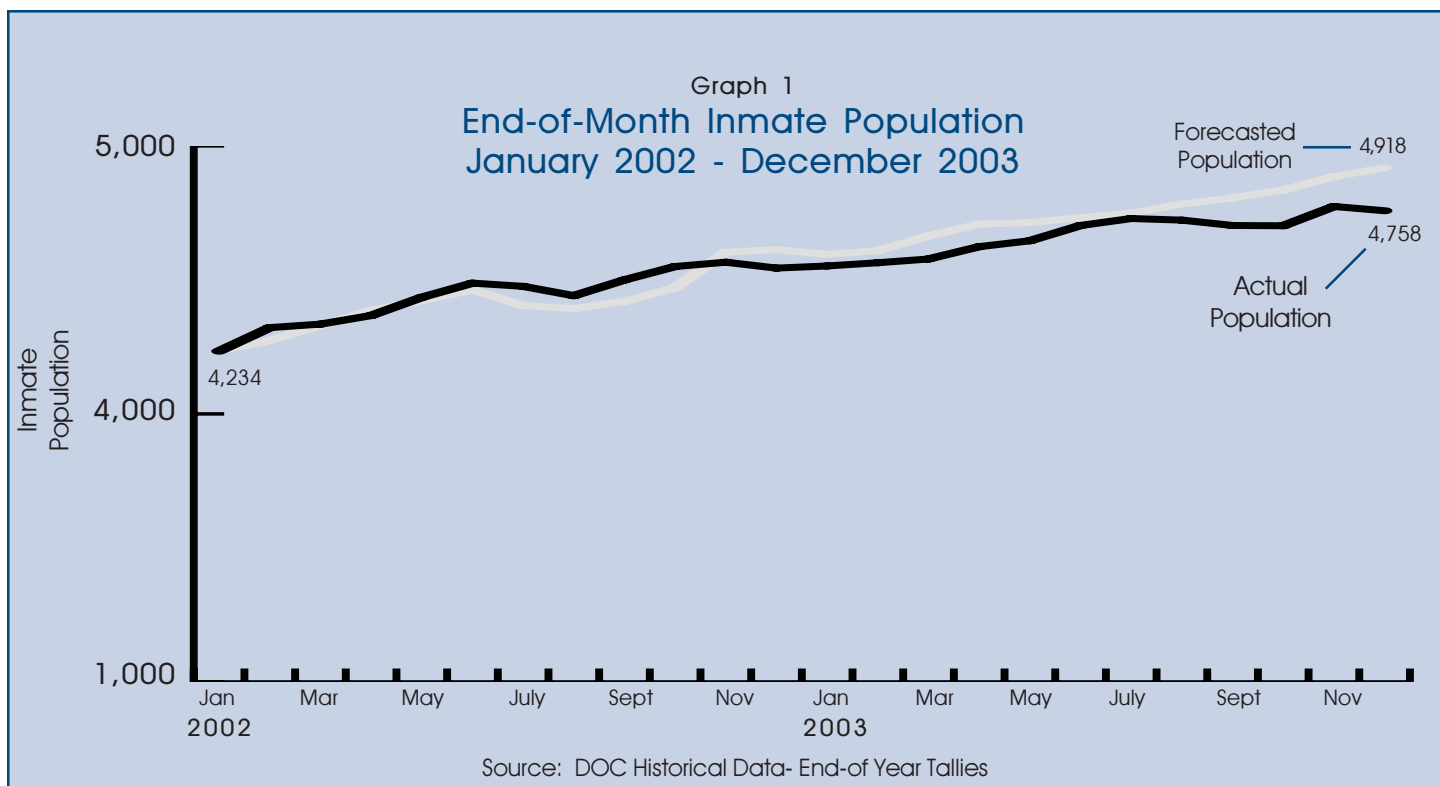
### Growth Forecasted by DCJS

In the *Correctional Population Forecast 2002-2012* report, the Criminal Justice Statistical Analysis Center and The George Washington University forecasted the correctional population for West Virginia. From the end of July 2002 to the end of December 2003 the forecasted difference averaged 43 more inmates than present in the actual population. This was an average difference of 0.9% over this entire span of time.

There is a difference between what the forecast has predicted and the actual prison population. At the end of December 2003 there were 4,758 inmates in the actual population (Graph 1). At the end of 2003, the rate of difference between the forecast and actual population was at 3.4%. The forecast predicted that there would be 160 more inmates in the prison population than actually existed. This rate of difference grew noticeable during the period from May to December. In May of 2003 the rate of difference was at 1.5%. There were 68 more inmates in the prison population than actually existed in May 2003.

## Report Highlights

- \* West Virginia's state prison population continued to increase in 2003.
- \* The current prison population is 3.4% less than the most recent forecast estimates.
- \* Given current trends, the state prison population is forecasted to continue growing to 5,853 inmates in 2007.
- \* The number of commitments increased by an average of 12.0% from 1993-2003.
- \* The property offense category made up the largest portion of admissions in 2002.
- \* Murder and robbery continue to be the offense categories treated most harshly in terms of average maximum sentences. These categories also represent a decreasing percentage of admissions in 2002.
- \* DUI offenses continue to receive the shortest average maximum sentences.
- \* Parole grant rates have remained stable over the past two years.
- \* The number of parole hearings increased during 2003.
- \* Between 2002-2003, there was a 24.0% increase in the percentage of offenders released to parole.
- \* There was a 10.2% increase in the percentage of offenders released from 2002-2003.



### New Commitments Increasing, Steadily

New commitments to the Division of Corrections continue to increase. In 2001, there were 1,991 individuals committed. In 2002, this increased by 8.5% to 2,161. The increase in commitments was not as prominent in 2003, at 3.7% to 2,242. Historically, the increase in commitments between 2001 and 2002 is not as stark as the numbers may suggest. In the mid-1990's, there were sharper increases in commitments, with the sharpest increase occurring between 1996 and 1997 (Graph 2). From 1993 through 2003 the total number of commitments increased by an average of 152 per year, an average of 12.0% over this span of time.

### Continued Growth is Forecast for WV

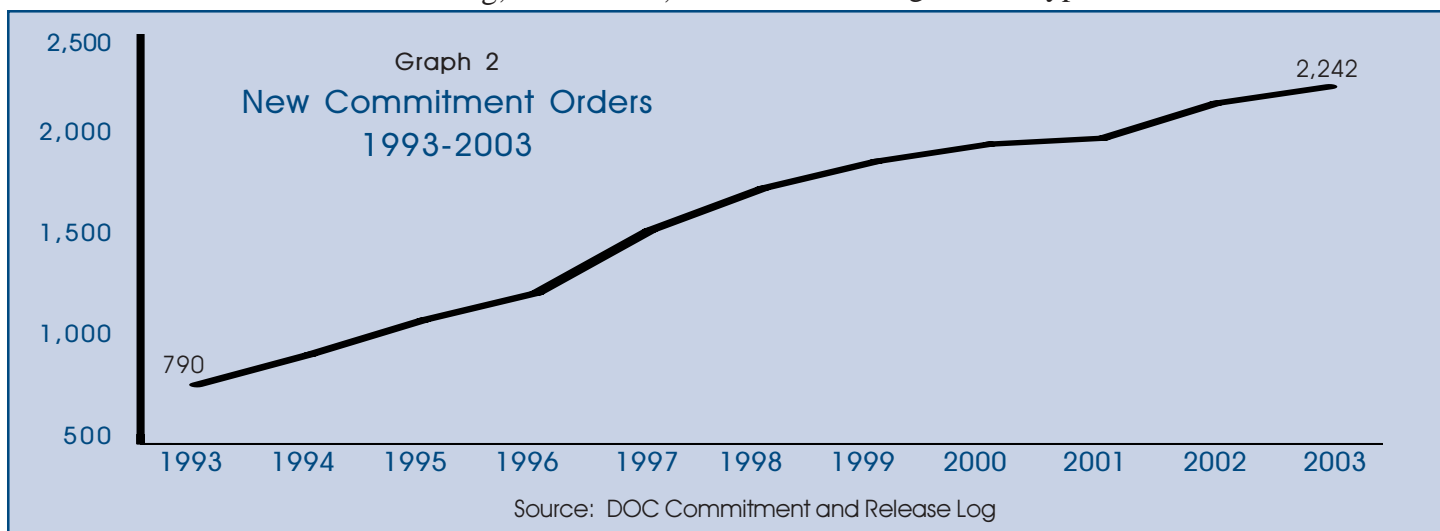
Given current trends in sentencing, admissions, and

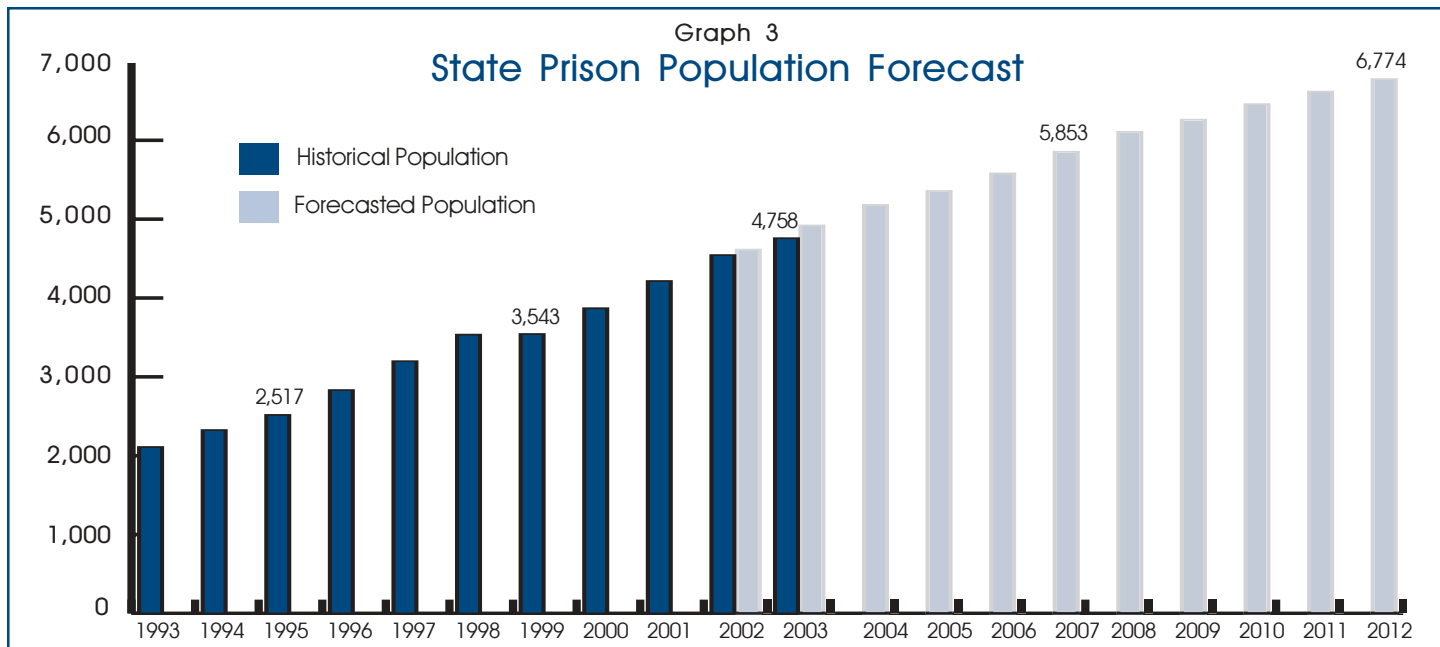
releases, within the State the population is forecast to continue growing and reach 5,853 in 2007 and 6,774 in 2012 (Graph 3).

### Commitment Trends by Type

There were decreases among all violent offender groups admitted to the Division of Corrections between 2001-2002 (Table 1). The lowest percentage of admissions for the violent categories of murder, sex crimes, and assault occurred in 2002. The sex crimes category saw the largest decrease of 2.8%, followed by murder at 0.6%, and assault at 0.1%. Robbery also saw a decrease of 0.5%. In the future, if this trend continues this may have an impact on the distribution of West Virginia's prison population.

The changes in the type of admissions for 2002, are





further underscored when examined by offense categories. Property offenses make up the largest percentage of new admissions with 35.6%, while violent offenses consist of only 24.6% of new commitments. The drug and DUI categories combine to make up 31.0% of the distribution. The property, drug, and DUI offense categories combine to represent two-thirds of the total admission distribution, while the violent offense categories represent only one-third of the total admission distribution for 2002.

The largest *increase* occurred in the drug offense category. There was a 4.8% increase in those admitted for drug offenses. DUI offenses increased by 1.9% and those admitted for property offenses increased by 3.2%, in 2002.

The largest *decrease* occurred in the burglary category, with a 4.8% decline in 2002. However, property offenses

continued to make up the largest portion of admissions in 2002. As a result, property offenses accounted for one-fifth of new admissions in 2002.

For the period between 1998-2002, admissions for violent offenses have declined while admissions for property, drug, and DUI offenses have increased. For instance, violent offenses previously comprised 36.7% of the total admissions. However, these same offenses consisted of only 24.6% of new admissions in 2002.

The percentage distribution for property offenses increased by 6.6% from 1998 to 2002. The drug and DUI categories made up 30.4% of the total admission distribution in 1998. There has been a slight increase of 0.6% for the drug and DUI categories in 2002.

There are some interesting changes in the admission distribution that can be seen when offense categories are further examined between 1998-2002. The largest percent

Table 1  
Inmates Admitted by Offense Category & Year  
1998 - 2002

Offense Category	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	% Change 2001-2002	% Change 1998-2002
Murder	7.2%	3.9%	5.1%	3.9%	3.3%	-0.6	-3.9
Sex Crimes	12.7%	11.5%	11.3%	10.6%	7.8%	-2.8	-4.9
Robbery	6.8%	5.0%	4.0%	6.0%	5.5%	-0.5	-1.3
Assault	10.0%	10.2%	9.4%	8.1%	8.0%	-0.1	-2.0
Burglary	13.6%	15.3%	15.1%	19.8%	15.0%	-4.8	+1.4
Property	15.4%	16.8%	16.1%	17.4%	20.6%	+3.2	+5.2
Drug	15.2%	14.8%	13.9%	10.9%	15.7%	+4.8	+0.5
Other	4.0%	4.7%	6.5%	9.8%	8.8%	-1.0	+4.8
DUI	15.2%	17.7%	18.6%	13.4%	15.3%	+1.9	+0.1

Note: Anthony Center inmates are not included in these figures. Source: NCRP Prisoner Admission Reports

Table 2  
Average Maximum Sentences in Months by  
Offense Category & Admission Year

Offense Category	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	Change (Months) 2001-2002	Change (Months) 1998-2002
Murder	287.8	246.3	258.0	247.4	384.9	+137.5	+97.1
Sex Crimes	232.8	228.3	257.4	237.7	181.0	-56.7	-51.8
Robbery	260.3	239.0	447.0	244.7	294.4	+49.7	+34.1
Assault	138.9	103.1	103.6	108.8	103.3	-5.5	-35.6
Burglary	168.6	167.9	191.8	215.8	198.4	-17.4	+29.8
Property	139.5	136.9	138.3	142.9	142.9	0.0	+3.4
Drug	125.8	124.5	121.7	123.5	128.9	+5.4	+3.1
Other	88.4	67.7	63.8	70.8	73.4	+2.6	-15.0
DUI	39.6	37.6	41.3	45.9	45.8	-0.1	+6.2

Source: NCRP Prisoner Admission Reports Note: Anthony Center & Diagnostic Populations are not included in this table.

change occurred for those admitted for property offenses. Among property offenses there was a 5.2% *increase* over this five year period. The sex crimes category had the largest *decrease* of 4.9%, followed by murder at 3.9%. DUI offenses, in particular, have remained the most stable throughout this period.

### Trends in Maximum Sentences

In 2002, there was a sharp increase in the average maximum sentence for the murder and robbery categories. From 2001 to 2002 there was an increase of 137.5 months for murder offenses (Table 2). Robbery offenses also increased by 49.7 months in 2002. Both murder and robbery continue to be the two offense categories treated most harshly in terms of average maximum sentence length.

In 2002 there was a decrease of 56.7 months in the sex crimes category. Burglary also declined by 17.4 months. The average maximum sentence for property offenses remained the same in 2001 and in 2002. DUI offenses were fairly stable between 2001-2002.

In general, there have been fluctuations in sentences across offense categories between 1998-2002. There are notable increases in the offense categories of murder and robbery. The robbery category experienced the second largest increase in maximum sentences given from 1998-2002, of 34.1 months. The murder category experienced the single largest increase in maximum sentences given. In this category there was an increase of 97.1 months.

Other trends among offense categories have taken place over the past five years. Burglary saw increases between 1999-2001. From 1998-2002 there was an increase of 29.8 months in the average maximum

sentences given for these offenses. Overall, the property offense category has remained the most stable, with only slight fluctuation in terms of average maximum sentence.

Comparing 1998 and 2002 figures, there are some prominent changes in the average maximum sentences between offense categories. The sex crimes category and the assault category were both treated less harshly in 2002 than they were in 1998. Conversely, the burglary and drug categories were treated more harshly in 2002 than were in 1998. In terms of average maximum sentence length, DUI offenses received the shortest sentences.

### Releases & Parole Hearings Increasing

The number of releases from Division of Corrections custody has continued to steadily increase (Graph 4). Prior to 2001 release data did not contain figures on those offenders in DOC custody who were released from jail, while awaiting transfer to state prison. In 2000, there were 1,278 releases. This number increased by a small proportion of 5.5% the next year to 1,348 releases. A small part of this increase was due to the inclusion of jail releases figures described above.

In 2002, there was 24.5% increase in releases. A total of 1,679 inmates were released in 2002. This increase resulted in 331 more offenders being released from DOC custody, 120 of these releases were from jail. There was an increase of 10.2% in 2003. There were 1,851 inmates released during this year. Here there were 172 more offenders being released from DOC custody than in the previous year.

Parole grant rates have fluctuated from a low of 25.0% in 2001 to a high of 36.0% in 2003 (Table 3). The parole grant rate has increased by only 2.0% over the

Table 3  
Parole Grant Rates  
by Type & Year

Year	Denied	Granted	Total	Grant Rate%
2000	1226	679	1905	36.0%
2001	1514	492	2006	25.0%
2002	1414	723	2137	34.0%
2003	1480	837	2317	36.0%

Note: The total column represents the sum of all cases in which the outcome was either a grant or denial of parole. Source: DOC Commitment and Release Log & Parole Board Hearing Database

past two years.

The parole board is considering more cases. In 2002, the parole board considered a total of 2,259 hearings or interviews. In 2003, the total number of hearings held increased by 6.7%, to 2,411. As a result, the number of offenders being released from prison to parole has grown.

There were 650 inmates released to parole in 2002, as compared to 806 in 2003. The number of offenders being released to parole has increased by 24.0%. Of those released in 2003, 43.5% were released to parole. This increase in the total number of releases in relation to the overall number of hearings, may help explain the 3.4% rate difference, between the forecast projections and the actual population.

## Methodology

### Forecast Population

The current forecast began in July 2002. This forecast includes those inmates sentenced to Anthony Center, and diagnostic inmates. Also, included are those committed to the Division of Corrections who are housed in local or regional jails. All of these DOC inmate populations are included in the forecast projections and other calculations unless otherwise noted.

**Anthony Center Correctional Center:** Those offenders sentenced to the Anthony Center have a shorter length of stay, as compared to other DOC facilities. Young offenders are typically sentenced to 6 months to 2 years in Anthony Center.

**Diagnostic:** These offenders can be sentenced to 60 days for a diagnostic evaluation.

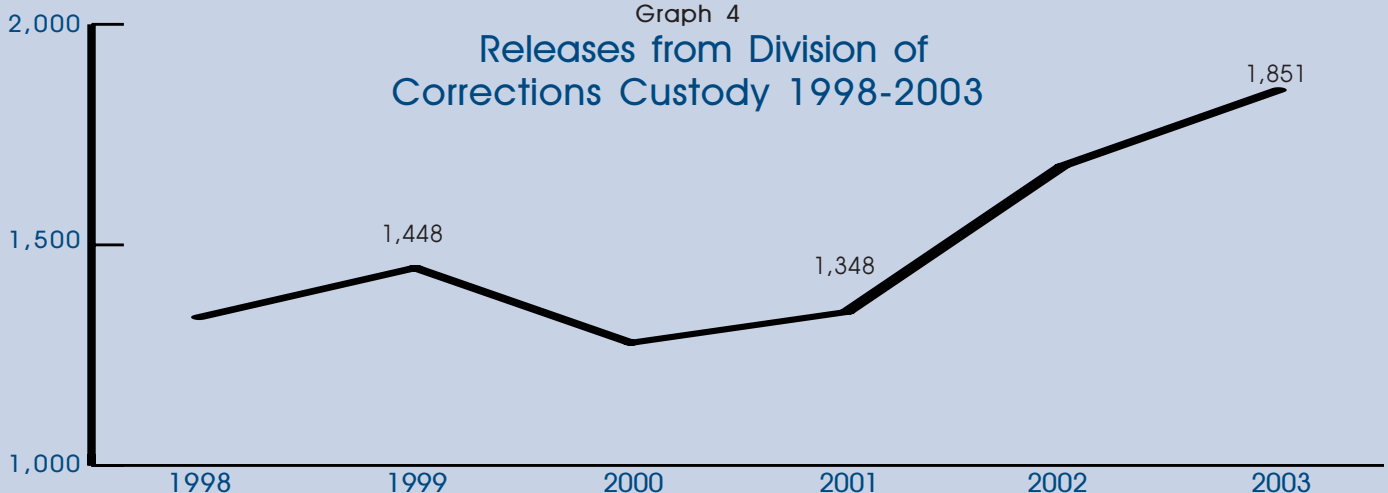
### Average Maximum Sentence

This average maximum sentence length is conversion of the total maximum sentence given for all offense into months. Anthony Center and Diagnostic populations are not included in the calculation of the average maximum sentence length. Statistical outliers were also excluded from this calculation as not to skew the overall average.

### Parole Grant Rate & Hearing Totals

The number of total parole interviews or hearings that were considered in 2002 and 2003 include all types of parole board outcomes. These figures were obtained from the 2002-2003 WV Parole Board Yearly Activity sheets.

Graph 4  
Releases from Division of  
Corrections Custody 1998-2003



Note: Release figures prior to 2001 do not include those offenders in DOC custody who were released from jail, while awaiting transfer to state prison, due to data availability issues. Source: DOC Commitment and Release Log



### **Total Number of Cases**

This table displays the total number of cases used in the calculation of the percentage of new admissions and the average maximum sentence length. Totals represented here were compiled through a historical search.

Table 4  
**Total Number of Cases by Offense Category & Year**

<u>Offense Category</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>
Murder	81	30	48	49	40
Sex Crimes	142	100	107	130	93
Robbery	76	40	38	59	66
Assault	112	95	89	106	96
Burglary	152	117	142	209	179
Property	173	182	152	217	247
Drug	170	146	131	138	188
Other	45	82	61	85	62
DUI	170	194	175	178	183
Missing	0	11	0	1	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>1121</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>1172</b>	<b>1197</b>

Note: In 2002, those admitted for parole revocations are included in accordance with the data provided. Parole revocations are not reported in this table for 1998-2001. Anthony Center inmates are not included in these figures. Minor differences between the percentages reported and the total number of cases reported here may exist due to missing data. Source: NCRP Admission Reports

### **Classification of Offense Categories**

Offenders are classified by their most serious offense into one of the following categories:

**Murder/Manslaughter:** 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Murder, Attempted Murder, Voluntary Manslaughter, Involuntary Manslaughter, Vehicular Homicide/Manslaughter, DUI with Death, Child Neglect Resulting in Death, Habitual Offender

**Sex Crimes:** 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Sexual Assault, 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Sexual Abuse, Sexual Abuse by Parent/Guardian, Sexual Abuse, Aiding & Abetting, Incest, Exhibiting/Possessing Materials of Minors in Sexual Act

**Robbery:** Robbery, Attempted Robbery, Aggravated and Unaggravated Robbery, Armed and Unarmed Robbery, Aiding & Abetting

**Assault:** Assault/Battery, Malicious Wounding, Unlawful Wounding, Malicious Assault, Abuse of Incapacitated Adult, Assault/Battery of Public Officer, Extortion, Kidnapping/Abduction, Attempted Kidnapping, Child Abuse/Neglect with Injury

**Burglary:** Burglary, Breaking & Entering, Entering without Breaking

**Property:** 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Arson, Fraud (Credit Card, Welfare, Computer), False Pretenses, Grand Larceny, Petit Larceny, 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense Shoplifting, Possessing/Receiving/Transferring Stolen Property, Forgery/Uttering, Counterfeiting, Embezzlement

**Drug:** Manufacturing/Delivering/Selling/Possessing Drugs, Obtaining Drugs by False Pretenses

**Other:** Attempt/Conspiracy to Commit Felony, Aiding & Abetting Felony, Accessory Before the Fact, Wanton Endangerment, Weapons Offenses, Escape, Obstruction, Failure to Appear, Failure to Pay Child Support, Pimping/Prostitution, Identity Theft, Intimidation of Judicial Officer/Witness, Violation of Civil Rights

**DUI:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense DUI, Fleeing Vehicle while DUI, Driving on Suspended/Revoked License

## *List of Data Sources Utilized in this Report*

### Commitments and Releases Log (1998-2003)

The Division of Corrections (DOC) Central Office maintains a Commitments and Releases Log (CRL). It includes information on the commitments to DOC, the releases from DOC, and parole hearings held for DOC inmates.

Commitments to DOC are tallied by month, type, and gender. The commitment information is obtained monthly from the County Jail Inmates Sentenced to DOC (CJISD) database. The database includes information on all inmates sentenced to DOC, regardless of their physical location.

Releases from DOC are tallied by month and type. This information is collected by the Division of Corrections Central Office from the facilities housing DOC inmates in a monthly report titled "Monthly Report of Activities."

Parole hearings are tallied by month and outcome. Parole hearing outcomes include grants and denials. This information is provided by the WV Parole Board through their monthly report.

### National Corrections Reporting Program (1998-2002)

The National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP) is a federal program coordinated by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics used to collect data from state's correctional systems. Each institution submits standard NCRP forms for every inmate admitted to and released from physical custody of the DOC. There are three reports that comprise the NCRP: Prisoner Admission Report, Prisoner Release Report, and the Parole Release Report. These forms are collected and entered by the DOC Central Office, then forwarded to U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

### End-of-Month Log (1998-2003)

The DOC Central Office maintains an End-of-Month Log (EML). It includes the number of inmates in DOC custody at the end of each month by gender, physical location, and commitment type. Two types of physical locations are recorded, jail or DOC prison. The commitment types include normal, Anthony Center, and diagnostic. The information is submitted to the Central Office by each institution housing DOC inmates. Data from the month of December is used as the end-of-year tally, for a specified year.

### Parole Hearing Database (2001-2003)

The DOC Central Office maintains a Parole Hearing Database (PHD). It includes the inmate name, inmate number, interview number of the inmate, parole revoked, times parole revoked, interview date, months until next interview, parole decision, offenses committed, minimum sentence, maximum sentence, race, gender, and institution. Each Institutional Parole Officer provides this information to the Office of Research after each visit by the Parole Board. The information obtained from this database is compared with information obtained from the WV Parole Board's monthly reports.

## Acknowledgments

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